PUBLIC ADMIN — PAPER II

DRAFT (TENTATIVE) MODEL ANSWER

SECTION A

Q1. Answer the following in about 150 words each: 10×5=50

(a) Learnings from Arthashastra could make governance effective even today. Explore the potential. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with Kautilya's Arthashastra as an early treatise on statecraft
2. BODY: Explain its core administrative principles with a table, then explore contemporary applicability with examples
3. CONCLUSION: End with Arthashastra as a timeless, not merely historical, administrative text

INTRODUCTION

Kautilya's Arthashastra (c. 4th century BCE), a comprehensive treatise on statecraft, economics and military strategy written for the Mauryan state, remains one of the earliest systematic works of public administration — predating Machiavelli's *The Prince* by nearly 1,800 years — and its principles of governance retain striking contemporary relevance.

BODY

Core administrative principles of the Arthashastra

Concept	Arthashastra principle	Modern parallel
Saptanga theory	Seven organic limbs of the state (Swami, Amatya, Janapada, Durga, Kosha, Danda, Mitra)	Systems approach to statecraft
Rajadharma	King's duty framed as *Yogakshema* — welfare of subjects as the ruler's primary obligation	Welfare-state responsibility
Mantri Parishad	Council of ministers advising the king, with structured deliberation	Cabinet system, collective responsibility
Adhyakshas	Specialised superintendents (of commerce, mines, agriculture, etc.)	Departmental/ministerial specialisation
Espionage (Gudhapurushas)	Secret agents to monitor officials and prevent corruption	Vigilance mechanisms, internal audit
Kantakashodhana	"Removal of thorns" — a dedicated judicial mechanism against corrupt officials, adulteration, and economic offences	Anti-corruption/vigilance courts
Danda-niti	Science of governance through statecraft and, where necessary, coercive authority, balanced with justice	Rule of law with enforcement capacity

Contemporary applicability/potential

- **Anti-corruption architecture**: Kautilya's famous observation that "just as it is impossible not to taste honey placed on the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government employee not to eat up at least a bit of the king's revenue" anticipated modern **principal-agent problems** in bureaucracy — informing today's vigilance, asset-disclosure and whistle-blower mechanisms.

- **Welfare orientation (Yogakshema)**: directly resonates with India's constitutional Directive Principles and modern welfare schemes — governance as the ruler's/state's *duty*, not merely a grant of power.
- **Economic statecraft**: Arthashastra's detailed treatment of taxation principles (equity, non-oppressiveness — "collecting revenue like a bee collects honey from a flower, without hurting it") informs contemporary fiscal-policy design.
- **Foreign policy realism**: the *Mandala* theory of concentric-circle diplomacy (with its Sama-Dana-Bheda-Danda fourfold strategy) continues to inform strategic and diplomatic thought.
- **Espionage/intelligence-based governance**: modern internal-security and vigilance apparatus echoes Kautilya's emphasis on information-gathering as central to good administration.

Limitations to be mindful of: the Arthashastra also endorsed a highly centralised, at times authoritarian and surveillance-heavy state — elements requiring adaptation, not wholesale adoption, in a constitutional democracy protecting individual rights.

CONCLUSION

Far from being a mere historical curiosity, Kautilya's Arthashastra offers a **remarkably systematic administrative grammar** — accountability mechanisms, welfare orientation, and economic statecraft — whose adapted application, filtered through constitutional values, can meaningfully strengthen contemporary Indian governance.

(b) The reforms in public sector enterprises is not only enduring but also evolving. Explain. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the post-independence rationale for PSEs
2. BODY: Trace the evolution of PSE reform across decades with a table, then explain its enduring and evolving character
3. CONCLUSION: End with PSE reform as a continuing, adaptive process

INTRODUCTION

Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), established post-independence to build a self-reliant industrial base under the "commanding heights" strategy (Second Five-Year Plan, Mahalanobis model), have since undergone a continuous, multi-decade process of reform — proving both **enduring** (a sustained policy commitment) and **evolving** (constantly changing in form and instruments).

BODY

Evolution of PSE reform across decades

Period	Reform thrust
1950s-1970s	Expansion and nationalisation (banks 1969/1980, coal, insurance) for a self-reliant, socialist economic base
1991 onward	Liberalisation: disinvestment begins, autonomy via Navratna/Miniratna status (1997)
2000s	Minority stake sales, listing of PSEs on stock exchanges for market discipline
2016-2020	Strategic disinvestment revived (Air India, BPCL attempts); NITI Aayog identifies non-core PSEs for exit
2021 onward	New Public Sector Enterprise Policy (four strategic sectors), National Monetisation Pipeline, Air India privatisation (2022) completed

Why the reform is "enduring"

- The core policy commitment — reducing the government's footprint in **non-strategic sectors** while retaining a **minimum presence in strategic sectors** — has persisted across governments of different political orientations since 1991, reflecting a durable cross-party consensus on the direction of reform.
- Institutional mechanisms (Department of Investment and Public Asset Management — DIPAM, formerly the Disinvestment Commission) have continuously existed since the 1990s to steward this process.

Why the reform is "evolving"

- **Instruments have diversified**: from simple minority equity sales in the 1990s to **strategic disinvestment** (management control transfer, e.g., Air India), **asset monetisation** (National Monetisation Pipeline, 2021 — leasing/monetising brownfield assets like highways, railway stations without transferring ownership), and **corporatisation** (converting departmental undertakings like Ordnance Factory Boards into corporate entities) — each generation of reform adding a new tool rather than simply repeating the old.
- **Policy rationale has evolved**: from pure fiscal-deficit financing in the 1990s toward the **New PSE Policy 2021's** structural rationale — government presence limited to four strategic sectors (atomic energy/space/defence; transport/telecom; power/petroleum/coal; banking/insurance/financial services) with a policy of **minimum one, maximum four** PSEs per strategic sector, and privatisation/merger/closure of the rest.
- **Corporate governance reform**: introduction of independent directors, performance-linked MoUs (Memoranda of Understanding), and greater operational autonomy for Navratna/Maharatna PSEs reflects evolving governance philosophy, not just ownership change.

A live illustration of both endurance and difficulty — IDBI Bank: the government/LIC's proposed sale of a 60.7% stake in IDBI Bank, in the pipeline since 2021, was effectively **scrapped in March 2026** after bids came in below the reserve price — with only **Air India (2022)** actually completed from the original post-2021 strategic-sale pipeline. This underlines that "enduring" policy commitment does not guarantee smooth execution — valuation risk, employee-union resistance and inter-ministerial coordination gaps continue to slow even flagship disinvestment transactions, evidencing the reform's evolving, still-unfinished character.

CONCLUSION

PSE reform in India thus exhibits genuine **policy endurance** in its underlying direction, while continuously **evolving** its instruments — from disinvestment to strategic sale to monetisation to corporatisation — making it best understood as an adaptive, ongoing structural transformation rather than a one-time event.

(c) The present model of strategic planning has roots in indicative planning. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the shift from imperative to indicative planning
2. BODY: Establish indicative planning's features and adoption, then comment on the continuity/change between it and NITI Aayog's strategic planning model
3. CONCLUSION: End with strategic planning as indicative planning's institutional successor

INTRODUCTION

Indicative planning — a model where the state sets broad developmental direction and targets through persuasion, incentives and coordination rather than binding, centrally-imposed directives — was adopted by India from the **Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97)** onward, marking a decisive break from the earlier **imperative/command-style planning** (Soviet-inspired) of the Nehru-Mahalanobis era.

BODY

Features of indicative planning

- Sets **broad targets and priorities**, leaving implementation flexibility to markets, states and private actors, unlike imperative planning's rigid physical output targets and licensing controls.
- Relies on **fiscal incentives, monetary policy signals, and public investment** to steer private investment in the desired direction, rather than direct administrative allocation.
- Emerged in India as a natural corollary of the **1991 LPG reforms**, once the License-Permit Raj was dismantled and the state could no longer command private-sector output.

Comment — continuity into the present strategic planning model, with one caveat

- **NITI Aayog** (replacing the Planning Commission in 2015) explicitly abandoned five-year physical planning altogether, adopting a **three-tier strategic architecture**: a **15-year Vision document**, a **7-year National Development Strategy**, and **3-year Action Agendas** — a further evolution, but still built on indicative planning's core logic of setting *direction* rather than *diktat*.
- **Cooperative and competitive federalism**: NITI Aayog's role as a "**think tank**" advising states, rather than an allocator of Plan funds (as the Planning Commission was via the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula), continues indicative planning's philosophy of persuasion over compulsion — states are now nudged via rankings (SDG India Index, Ease of Doing Business) rather than commanded via fund allocation.
- **Sectoral strategy documents** function exactly as indicative planning intended: setting an ambitious national target and using fiscal incentives to align private investment behind it, without direct state production — the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes**, spanning 14 sectors with a combined outlay of roughly **₹1.97 lakh crore** since 2020-21, are the clearest contemporary example, steering private manufacturing investment (electronics, semiconductors, pharma) toward national targets purely through incentive design, not command allocation.
- **My comment/caveat**: the continuity is real but not total — NITI Aayog's abandonment of even indicative five-year *physical* plans in favour of a pure Vision-Strategy-Action horizon marks a genuine additional step beyond what indicative planning in its 1990s form contemplated, so "roots in" is accurate, but "identical to" would overstate the continuity.

CONCLUSION

The present strategic-planning model — NITI Aayog's vision-strategy-action architecture — is thus not a break from indicative planning but its **direct institutional descendant**, retaining the core logic of guiding rather than commanding economic actors while updating the toolkit for a liberalised, federal economy.

(d) Linkages between the district administration and local self governments have not evolved to the desired extent. Evaluate. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the constitutional vision of 73rd/74th Amendments
2. BODY: Explain the intended linkage mechanisms, then weigh what has worked against what has not, to reach a evaluative verdict
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need to operationalise the 3Fs (Funds, Functions, Functionaries)

INTRODUCTION

The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992)** envisioned Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as genuine "**institutions of self-government**" (Article 243G/243W), intended to work in close coordination with the district administration through statutory linkage mechanisms — a vision that has been only partially realised.

BODY

Intended linkage mechanisms

- **District Planning Committee (DPC)** under Article 243ZD: mandated to consolidate rural (Panchayat) and urban (Municipal) development plans into one coherent district development plan.
- **District Collector/Magistrate** as the traditional coordinating authority for both regulatory (law and order) and developmental functions at the district level.
- **Devolution of the 3Fs** — Funds, Functions and Functionaries — from state governments to PRIs/ULBs, as envisaged under the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules.

Evaluation — weighing what has worked against what has not

What has worked, at least partially:

- The **15th Finance Commission** tied roughly **₹4.36 lakh crore** in local-body grants (2021-26) partly to basic governance conditions, giving states a genuine fiscal incentive to activate DPCs that did not exist before.

- **Kerala's People's Plan Campaign** (since 1996) stands as proof of concept that DPC-based, bottom-up integrated planning can function exactly as constitutionally envisaged when a state genuinely commits to it — showing the gap is one of state-level political will, not a flaw in the constitutional design itself.

What has not worked — the larger and heavier side of the balance:

- **DPCs largely dysfunctional or non-existent** elsewhere: most states have either not constituted District Planning Committees at all, or reduced them to a formality without genuine plan integration, as repeatedly flagged by the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)**.
- **Incomplete devolution of the 3Fs**: state governments have devolved functions on paper (Eleventh Schedule's 29 subjects) but retained control over funds and functionaries, leaving PRIs financially and administratively dependent, undermining genuine linkage/coordination.
- **Parallel bodies (parastatals)**: continued operation of District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs, though largely merged into Panchayats post-2015), state line-department field offices, and various mission-mode agencies bypasses elected local bodies, creating a **coordination vacuum** rather than integration with district administration.
- **Bureaucratic dominance persists**: the District Collector, still the pivotal administrative authority, often functions independently of elected PRI/ULB leadership rather than in genuine partnership, reflecting the colonial-era administrative hierarchy's persistence over the newer constitutional local-government structure.
- **Capacity deficit**: PRIs/ULBs often lack the technical and planning capacity to meaningfully engage with district administration on integrated development planning, further weakening the intended linkage.

Verdict: weighed together, the isolated successes (Kerala) remain the exception that proves the rule rather than a genuine national trend — on balance, the evidence supports the premise that linkages "have not evolved to the desired extent."

CONCLUSION

While the constitutional architecture for district-local body linkage exists on paper, its **practical evolution has lagged**, chiefly due to incomplete 3F devolution and continued bureaucratic dominance — genuine grassroots democracy now requires states to operationalise DPCs and complete devolution nationally, not merely retain the constitutional text or point to isolated exceptions.

(e) Constitutionalism in India paves the way for rule of law and social justice. Elaborate. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with distinguishing constitutionalism from mere constitution
2. BODY: Explain how constitutionalism enables Rule of Law and social justice with case law
3. CONCLUSION: End with constitutionalism as the living guarantee of both

INTRODUCTION

Constitutionalism — the principle that government authority is derived from and limited by a body of fundamental law — is distinct from merely having a *constitution* (a document); India's constitutionalism, embedded in limited government, separation of powers, judicial review and fundamental rights, has been the vehicle through which both **Rule of Law** and **social justice** have been substantively realised.

BODY

How constitutionalism enables Rule of Law

- **Basic Structure Doctrine** (*Kesavananda Bharati*, 1973): places Rule of Law and constitutional supremacy beyond the reach of even a two-thirds parliamentary majority, ensuring no organ of the state — including the amending power itself — is above the Constitution.
- **Judicial review** (Articles 13, 32, 226): empowers courts to strike down any law or executive action inconsistent with fundamental rights, operationalising Dicey's "no arbitrary power" principle within India's written-constitution framework.
- **Separation of powers and checks and balances**: distributes authority across legislature, executive and judiciary, preventing the concentration of power that Rule of Law is designed to guard against.

How constitutionalism enables social justice

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)**, though non-justiciable, were held in *Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)* to be in **harmonious balance** with Fundamental Rights (Part III) — together forming the "conscience of the Constitution" aimed at both liberty and social-economic justice.
- **Reservation policy** (Articles 15(4), 16(4)) and affirmative action, upheld and refined through cases like *Indra Sawhney (1992)*, operationalise the constitutional promise of substantive (not merely formal) equality — central to social justice.
- **Expansive interpretation of Article 21**: from *Maneka Gandhi (1978)* onward, courts have read the right to life to include rights to livelihood, health, education, clean environment and dignity — using constitutionalism's interpretive openness to advance social justice through judicial innovation.
- **Preamble's twin promise** of "Justice — social, economic and political" alongside "Liberty" and "Equality" is given practical teeth precisely because constitutionalism subjects all state action, including legislative majorities, to constitutional scrutiny.

CONCLUSION

Constitutionalism in India is thus not a static legal formality but a **living, enforceable framework** — through Basic Structure, judicial review and the harmonised Rights-Directives relationship — that simultaneously guarantees the negative liberty of Rule of Law and the affirmative promise of social justice.

Q2. (a) An important characteristic of the British Civil Service was its open refusal to be influenced by commercial and industrial interests of India in the name of neutrality. Explain. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the ICS's claimed doctrine of political and economic neutrality
2. BODY: Explain the claimed neutrality doctrine, then expose how it actually served British commercial interests, with historical evidence
3. CONCLUSION: End with "neutrality" as a colonial instrument, not genuine impartiality

INTRODUCTION

The **Indian Civil Service (ICS)**, famously termed the "**steel frame**" of British India by Lloyd George, projected an ideology of strict political and administrative **neutrality** — officers were formally expected to act impartially, uninfluenced by commercial or sectional interests. Yet this professed neutrality, examined against the actual record of colonial administration, functioned in practice as a mechanism that protected British economic dominance while appearing procedurally impartial toward India's own commercial and industrial interests.

BODY

The doctrine of neutrality as officially framed

- ICS officers were recruited through a competitive examination (from 1853, opened partially to Indians from 1922 onward via increased Indianisation) and trained to see themselves as impartial guardians of law and order, insulated from "politics" and "trade," in a deliberate echo of the emerging Northcote-Trevelyan reforms in Britain itself.
- This neutrality was presented as a *virtue* — the ICS as an incorruptible, apolitical instrument of governance, distinct from the earlier, overtly commercial East India Company administration.

How "neutrality" in practice shielded British commercial interests

- **Revenue and land-settlement policy**: systems like the Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari and Mahalwari, administered by "neutral" ICS officers, were structurally designed to maximise land revenue extraction for the colonial exchequer, systematically disregarding Indian agrarian and industrial development.
- **Tariff and trade policy**: colonial administration maintained **free trade for British manufactured goods** entering India while India's own nascent industries (notably textiles) received no comparable tariff protection — a policy scholars like **Dadabhai Naoroji** (in his "**Drain of Wealth**" theory) identified as systematically transferring Indian wealth to Britain under a facade of administrative neutrality.
- **Railways and infrastructure**: built and administered ostensibly for "development," but route planning and freight-pricing structures were calibrated to serve British export/import trade (moving raw materials out, finished goods in) rather than internal Indian commercial integration.
- **Suppression of indigenous industry**: colonial administrative and taxation policy actively discouraged Indian industrial enterprise (e.g., punitive excise duty on Indian cotton mills matching British import tariffs, effectively neutralising any competitive advantage), even while officially maintaining a stance of non-interference.
- **B.B. Misra**, in *The Administrative History of India*, and other historians have documented how ICS "neutrality" was selectively applied — rigorously enforced against Indian commercial lobbying, while British business interests (managing agencies, chambers of commerce) enjoyed privileged, informal access to policy-making.
- **Nationalist critique**: early Indian economic nationalists (Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, M.G. Ranade) argued that the ICS's claimed neutrality was itself a **political choice** — maintaining the economic status quo of colonial extraction was not "neutral" but actively favoured British interests over Indian industrial development.

Nuance: Some scope for genuine administrative impartiality did exist at the level of individual district administration (rule of law in routine civil/criminal matters), but at the systemic policy level — trade, tariffs, industrial licensing — neutrality functioned as an ideological cover for structurally pro-British economic policy.

CONCLUSION

The ICS's celebrated "neutrality" toward India's commercial and industrial interests was, on close historical examination, less a genuine impartiality than a **structurally selective doctrine** — procedurally correct in form, but substantively aligned with British imperial economic interests, a legacy that shaped independent India's post-1947 determination to build a self-reliant, state-directed industrial base.

(b) The political culture in India shapes bureaucratic behaviour, professional integrity and civil service conduct. Explain with suitable examples. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the concept of political culture and its interface with bureaucracy
2. BODY: Explain the features of India's political culture and their specific impact on bureaucratic behaviour, integrity and conduct, with examples
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for institutional insulation to protect professional integrity

INTRODUCTION

Political culture — the pattern of attitudes, values and orientations citizens and elites hold toward the political system (Almond & Verba's classic formulation) — profoundly shapes how bureaucracy actually functions in practice, often diverging sharply from the formally neutral, rule-bound Weberian ideal that India's civil service is constitutionally designed to embody.

BODY

Features of India's political culture affecting bureaucracy

Feature of political culture	Effect on bureaucratic behaviour
Patron-client politics	Transfer-posting used as reward/punishment, undermining security of tenure
Personalised/VIP culture	Discretionary favour extended to the politically connected, eroding equal treatment
Caste/community-based mobilisation	Influences recruitment perception, local-level service delivery bias
High expectation of state paternalism	Pressure for populist, short-term administrative decisions over long-term planning
Coalition/fragmented politics	Frequent bureaucratic reshuffling, policy discontinuity
Weak rule-consciousness among citizenry	Normalisation of "system-bypass" via bribery/influence

Specific impacts with examples

- **Frequent and arbitrary transfers**: a widely-cited Harvard study of IAS transfer records (**Iyer and Mani**, covering 1980-2004) found that roughly **49% of IAS officers were transferred every year**, with an **average actual tenure of only about 16 months** in a post against the prescribed 3-5 year norm — a direct product of political patronage culture, undermining institutional memory and long-term policy execution; this concern directly motivated the **Prakash Singh case (2006)** directive mandating minimum tenure for police officers.
- **"Sarkari" discretionary culture**: politically-influenced discretionary allocation (in licensing, land, welfare-scheme beneficiary selection) has historically created space for corruption, addressed only partially by e-governance/DBT reforms that reduce person-to-person discretion.
- **Erosion of professional integrity under political pressure**: officers who resist politically-motivated but questionable directions have at times faced punitive transfers, illustrating the tension between constitutional conscience and political-culture-driven compliance expectations — a tension the judiciary addressed in **T.S.R. Subramanian v. Union of India (2013)**, which directed fixed minimum tenure and a written-order requirement for significant instructions to civil servants, precisely to insulate bureaucratic conduct from arbitrary political culture.
- **Populist administrative behaviour**: election-cycle-driven administrative decisions (e.g., last-minute scheme announcements, waiver policies) reflect how democratic political culture's short electoral horizon shapes bureaucratic priority-setting.

- **Civil service conduct rules vs. lived practice**: while the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules formally mandate political neutrality, the reality of India's intensely competitive, patronage-oriented political culture creates persistent informal pressure that conduct rules alone cannot fully neutralise.

CONCLUSION

India's political culture — marked by patronage, personalism and short electoral horizons — thus exerts a powerful, often distortive, influence on bureaucratic behaviour and integrity; sustainable reform requires **institutional insulation mechanisms** (fixed tenure, transparent transfer policy, a Civil Services Board as recommended by the 2nd ARC) rather than reliance on individual officer conscience alone.

(c) Under the Indian Constitution fundamental rights are usually enforced only vertically, whereas Vishaka case represents the horizontal application. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Distinguish vertical and horizontal application of fundamental rights
2. BODY: Establish the general vertical rule, then comment on how and why Vishaka broke new ground, with subsequent developments
3. CONCLUSION: End with horizontal application as an evolving, welcome expansion

INTRODUCTION

Fundamental Rights under Part III of the Indian Constitution are, as a general rule, enforceable **vertically** — i.e., against the "**State**" as defined in Article 12 (government, Parliament, statutory authorities) — rather than **horizontally**, against private individuals or entities; the Supreme Court's judgment in ***Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997)** marked a significant, judicially-crafted exception extending certain rights protections horizontally into private workplace relations.

BODY

The general rule — vertical enforcement

- Article 12 defines "State" broadly (government, Parliament/legislatures, local authorities, and "other authorities" performing public functions), and Fundamental Rights are ordinarily enforceable only against such state entities — a private employer, for instance, could not traditionally be sued directly under Article 14/21 for discriminatory treatment.
- Rationale: constitutional rights were originally conceived primarily as protections of the citizen **against state power**, consistent with classical liberal constitutionalism's negative-liberty framework.

Comment — Vishaka as the horizontal breakthrough, and why it was justified

- In the absence of specific legislation on workplace sexual harassment, the Supreme Court, invoking **Article 141** (Supreme Court's law-declaring power) and international conventions (CEDAW), laid down binding **"Vishaka Guidelines"** applicable to *all* workplaces — government and private alike — effectively extending constitutional protection (Articles 14, 15, 21) horizontally into private employer-employee relationships.
- The Court reasoned that the fundamental right to a safe working environment and dignity (Article 21) could not remain confined to state employment alone when the underlying harm (sexual harassment) occurred equally in private establishments.

Subsequent developments consolidating horizontal application

- The Vishaka Guidelines were later **codified into statute** through the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act)**, converting judicially-created horizontal rights into a directly enforceable private-sector obligation.
- Later jurisprudence has cautiously extended similar horizontal reasoning in limited contexts (e.g., certain privacy and non-discrimination claims against powerful private entities performing quasi-public functions), though India has not adopted a general doctrine of full horizontal application of all fundamental rights, unlike some other jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

Vishaka thus represents a **carefully-bounded but significant exception** to India's predominantly vertical fundamental-rights framework — demonstrating the judiciary's willingness to extend constitutional protection into private spheres where a genuine rights-vacuum exists, a precedent that continues to inform debates on extending constitutional accountability to powerful private and digital-platform actors today.

Q3. (a) Planning Commission planned for economic development and social justice, but NITI Aayog has been structured to realise growth potential across the sectors. Discuss. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the 2015 institutional transition
2. BODY: Compare the two institutions in a table, then discuss the philosophical/functional shift in detail
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced assessment of the transition's rationale and trade-offs

INTRODUCTION

The **Planning Commission** (established 1950, an extra-constitutional body) was replaced in **January 2015** by the **NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India)**, marking a fundamental philosophical shift from centralised, allocation-driven five-year planning toward a decentralised, advisory, growth-facilitation model.

BODY

Comparative institutional structure

Basis	Planning Commission	NITI Aayog
Nature	Extra-constitutional, quasi-governmental body with financial powers	Extra-constitutional think tank, advisory only
Fund allocation	Allocated Plan funds to states via the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula	No fund allocation power — that shifted to Ministry of Finance
Structure	Top-down, centrally-driven Five-Year Plans	Bottom-up, cooperative-federalism model with Governing Council of all CMs
Approach	Imperative/target-based planning with sectoral allocations	Indicative: 15-year Vision, 7-year Strategy, 3-year Action Agenda
Federalism	States seen as recipients of central plan funds	States as "equal partners," reflected in Governing Council structure

Planning Commission's economic development and social justice orientation

- Rooted in the **Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy** (Second Five-Year Plan), prioritising heavy industry, public-sector-led development, and redistributive social justice goals through targeted plan allocations (poverty alleviation programmes, backward-area development).
- Functioned as the primary instrument translating **Directive Principles of State Policy** into resource allocation, with an explicit socialist-pattern-of-society orientation reflecting the Constitution's welfare-state vision.

NITI Aayog's growth-potential orientation

- Designed post-liberalisation for a **market-oriented, federal economy** where the state's role is to enable rather than direct growth — consistent with the broader shift examined in the indicative-planning discussion (Q1c).
- Functions as a **knowledge and innovation hub**: policy think-tank, monitoring SDG implementation via the SDG India Index, running competitive-ranking exercises (Aspirational Districts Programme, Ease of Living Index) to incentivise state-level performance rather than directing it centrally. The Index's own trajectory illustrates the model's intent — India's composite SDG score rose from 57 (2018) to 66 (2020-21) to **71 in the 2023-24 edition**, with Kerala and Uttarakhand topping at 79 and Bihar lowest at 57 — comparative, published scores designed to nudge lagging states through reputational pressure rather than central directive.
- **Sector-specific growth facilitation**: through specialised verticals (agriculture, infrastructure, social sector, science & technology) offering technical advisory support to ministries and states, positioning itself as a catalyst for realising each sector's growth potential rather than a controller of resources.
- Promotes **cooperative and competitive federalism** simultaneously — cooperative through its Governing Council bringing all Chief Ministers into national policy dialogue, and competitive through comparative state/district rankings that incentivise performance-based development.

Critical assessment

- Critics argue NITI Aayog's loss of financial teeth (no fund-allocation power) has **diluted its ability to enforce social-justice priorities**, since without resource leverage, its recommendations remain persuasive rather than binding — a genuine trade-off compared to the Planning Commission's fund-linked authority.
- Supporters argue the shift correctly reflects a **post-1991 market economy**, where directing private and state capital through incentive-based, sector-specific strategy is more effective than command allocation, and that social justice concerns are now addressed through targeted, better-monitored welfare schemes (DBT-based) rather than blanket Plan allocations.

CONCLUSION

The transition from Planning Commission to NITI Aayog thus reflects a genuine, considered institutional recalibration — from a centrally-directed instrument of development and redistribution to a **facilitative, federal, growth-oriented knowledge institution** — though the continuing challenge is ensuring this lighter-touch model does not dilute the constitutional commitment to social justice that anchored the earlier planning era.

(b) Government of India has done Corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Boards. Discuss the rationale in the light of Disinvestment Policy of the government. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the October 2021 corporatisation decision
2. BODY: Explain what corporatisation involved, the rationale, and its link to broader disinvestment/PSE policy
3. CONCLUSION: End with corporatisation as a calibrated middle path between status quo and privatisation

INTRODUCTION

In **October 2021**, the Government of India corporatised the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)** — a nearly 200-year-old departmental organisation directly under the Ministry of Defence — converting its 41 ordnance factories into **seven new Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)**: Munitions India Limited, Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited, Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited, Troop Comforts Limited, Yantra India Limited, India Optel Limited, and Gliders India Limited.

BODY

What corporatisation entailed

- Transformed OFB from a **government department** (subject to civil-service rules, bureaucratic procurement procedures, and departmental accounting) into **corporate entities** governed by the Companies Act, with independent boards, professional management, and commercial accounting standards.
- Employees were given the option to remain government servants on deputation or opt into the new corporate structure, addressing labour-transition concerns.

Rationale for corporatisation

- **Operational and financial autonomy**: departmental status subjected OFB to slow, bureaucratic decision-making (General Financial Rules, civil-service procurement timelines) ill-suited to the technologically dynamic and time-sensitive defence-production sector.
- **Accountability and performance orientation**: corporate structure introduces commercial accounting, independent audit, and performance-linked management, replacing the opaque, subsidy-cushioned departmental model.
- **Efficiency and cost competitiveness**: OFB had long faced criticism (including from **Parliamentary Standing Committee reports** and **CAG audits**) for cost overruns, quality issues, and delayed deliveries to the armed forces — corporatisation aimed to introduce competitive discipline.
- **Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence production**: aligning with India's defence self-reliance push, corporatised entities can more nimbly enter joint ventures, technology partnerships and export markets — activities difficult for a rule-bound government department.

Link to the broader Disinvestment/New PSE Policy framework

- The **New Public Sector Enterprise Policy, 2021** identifies **defence** as one of only **four strategic sectors** where the government will retain a **minimum presence** (rather than exiting entirely, as in non-strategic sectors), with a policy of "at least one, at most four" PSEs per strategic sector — corporatisation of OFB into multiple specialised DPSUs directly implements this template within defence production.

- Crucially, corporatisation is **not privatisation** — ownership remains 100% with the government; it is a **preparatory/intermediate reform** consistent with the disinvestment policy's broader logic of first improving governance and efficiency (via corporatisation) before considering any future strategic disinvestment or minority stake sale, as has been done with other central PSUs.
- It mirrors similar corporatisation exercises (e.g., conversion of the erstwhile Department of Telecommunications' operations into BSNL in 2000) that preceded eventual disinvestment consideration, reflecting the government's calibrated, sequenced approach to PSE reform discussed in Q1(b).

Three years on — the performance evidence (2024-25 data)

- **Profitability turnaround**: six of the seven DPSUs turned profitable in FY24 — Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL) led with **₹605 crore profit**, and Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) swung from a ₹12.79 crore loss (FY23) to a ₹20.24 crore profit — against a baseline where all 41 erstwhile ordnance factories had cumulatively run losses under departmental control; only Troop Comforts Limited (TCL) remained in the red (₹303 crore loss).
- **Export surge**: DPSU exports rose from **₹82.18 crore (FY23) to ₹1,976.51 crore (FY24)** — a roughly 24-fold increase — though concentrated overwhelmingly in Munitions India Limited (86% of the total), pointing to uneven diversification.
- **Persisting gaps**: of ₹5,757 crore released for capital expenditure/modernisation through FY25, only about 57% (₹3,262 crore) had actually been utilised by December 2024 — indicating that corporatisation has improved profitability and export orientation faster than it has resolved capex-absorption and R&D-investment capacity, a caution against declaring the reform an unqualified success.

CONCLUSION

The corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board thus represents a **carefully calibrated middle path** — retaining full public ownership in a strategically sensitive sector while injecting corporate efficiency, financial autonomy and accountability — squarely consistent with, and a direct application of, the government's broader four-strategic-sector disinvestment and PSE reform philosophy.

(c) Competitive federalism in India while intended to have healthy competition among states has shown tendencies towards parochialism. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Define competitive federalism and its intended purpose
2. BODY: Establish the intended mechanisms, then comment critically on the parochial tendencies they have generated
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need to balance competition with cooperative safeguards

INTRODUCTION

Competitive federalism — states competing with one another for investment, resources and better governance rankings, rather than merely bargaining with the Centre — was actively promoted post-2014 as a complement to India's traditional **cooperative federalism**, but its practical operation has increasingly revealed tendencies toward inter-state **parochialism** rather than purely healthy competition.

BODY

Intended mechanisms of competitive federalism

- **NITI Aayog rankings**: SDG India Index, Ease of Doing Business rankings, Aspirational Districts Programme — designed to incentivise states to improve governance performance through comparative benchmarking rather than central directive.
- **Investment competition**: states competing to attract private investment through tax incentives, land/labour reforms, and single-window clearances.
- **Fiscal federalism instruments**: Finance Commission's performance-based grant criteria intended to reward good governance and fiscal prudence.

Comment — where healthy competition has curdled into parochialism

- **Inter-state migration/resource disputes**: competition over river-water sharing (Cauvery, Krishna) has periodically hardened into narrow regional assertions rather than cooperative resolution.
- **Finance Commission population-criteria controversy**: southern states' objections to the 15th Finance Commission's use of 2011 (rather than 1971) population data — since southern states achieved faster demographic transition — reflect how fiscal competition for devolution shares can harden into regionalist grievance rather than healthy competition. The **16th Finance Commission** (Chairperson: Dr Arvind Panagariya; award period 2026-31, tabled February 2026) has only partly defused this: it retained the **41% vertical devolution** share but revised the horizontal formula — Income Distance 42.5%, Population (2011) 17.5%, Demographic Performance 10%, Area 10%, Forest 10%, and a **new 10% weight for a state's contribution to national GDP** — a criterion explicitly favouring higher-income, faster-growing states and one southern/western states welcomed even as some poorer states flagged it as reinforcing regional inequity.
- **NITI Aayog's own Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026** has, ironically, sharpened parochial comparison rather than only encouraging emulation: it ranked **Odisha first** among 18 major states (helped substantially by mining-royalty revenue), while **Tamil Nadu and Kerala slipped into the "Aspirational" tier**, with Tamil Nadu scoring just **32/100 on expenditure quality against Odisha's 52/100** — rankings some southern commentators have criticised as methodologically biased against high-welfare-spending states, illustrating how competitive fiscal benchmarking itself can become a site of centre-state and inter-state contestation.
- **"Race to the bottom" in incentive competition**: states competing to offer ever-larger tax holidays/subsidies to attract industry risk a fiscally unsustainable race, prioritising short-term parochial gain over long-term collective fiscal health.
- **Politicisation of central scheme implementation**: disputes over scheme branding, fund-routing (direct transfer vs. state treasury), and GST compensation have periodically taken on an "us vs. them," state-vs-Centre or state-vs-state adversarial tone rather than genuinely cooperative competition.
- **Cess and subsidy wars**: states periodically engage in competitive populism (free electricity, loan waivers) driven more by inter-state one-upmanship than sustainable policy design, deepening the state fiscal-stress concerns discussed elsewhere in this paper.

CONCLUSION

Competitive federalism's original promise — states as laboratories of innovation, competing on governance quality — thus requires **stronger cooperative guardrails** (a genuinely consensus-based GST Council model, transparent and stable devolution formulae, inter-state water tribunals with binding authority) to prevent healthy competition from curdling into fiscally corrosive and politically divisive parochialism.

Q4. (a) Doctrine of Pith and Substance, and the Doctrine of severability in the legislative relations between the Indian Union and states are supplementary in nature but distinct in application. Discuss. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the Seventh Schedule framework of legislative relations
2. BODY: Explain both doctrines with case law, then show their supplementary-but-distinct relationship
3. CONCLUSION: End with both as essential judicial tools for cooperative legislative federalism

INTRODUCTION

India's quasi-federal legislative architecture — dividing subjects among the Union, State and Concurrent Lists under **Article 246** and the **Seventh Schedule** — inevitably produces boundary disputes when a law enacted by one legislature incidentally touches upon a subject assigned to another; the judicially-evolved **Doctrine of Pith and Substance** and **Doctrine of Severability** together resolve such disputes, operating in a supplementary but functionally distinct manner.

BODY

Doctrine of Pith and Substance

- Holds that if the **"true nature and character"** (pith and substance) of a law falls within the enacting legislature's competence, the law remains valid even if it *incidentally* encroaches upon a subject in another list.
- Originated in Indian jurisprudence through cases like ***State of Bombay v. F.N. Balsara* (1951)** (Bombay Prohibition Act, though touching on import/export — a Union subject — upheld as, in pith and substance, a State subject of "intoxicating liquors") and ***R.M.D. Chamarbaugwala v. Union of India*** (Union's competence over prize competitions).
- **Purpose**: prevents a law from being struck down merely because it has some incidental effect on another list's subject — the courts examine the **true, dominant purpose** of the legislation, not each and every ancillary consequence.

Doctrine of Severability

- Holds that when only a **part** of a statute is unconstitutional (for exceeding legislative competence or violating fundamental rights), courts will strike down only that **offending portion**, preserving the remainder of the Act *if the valid part can stand independently* of the invalid part.
- Articulated authoritatively in ***A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950)** *and refined in subsequent cases — the test being whether the legislature would have enacted the valid part even without the invalid part (legislative intent test**).
- **Purpose**: prevents wholesale invalidation of an otherwise valid statute merely because one provision within it is constitutionally infirm.

How the two doctrines are supplementary

- Both serve the same overarching judicial goal: **preserving legislative competence and statutory validity to the maximum extent constitutionally permissible**, rather than mechanically striking down laws for technical boundary transgressions — reflecting a judicial philosophy favouring legislative federalism's smooth functioning.
- Both operate as **interpretive tools of restraint**, requiring courts to look beyond surface textual overlap to the law's substantive character (Pith and Substance) or salvageable core (Severability).

How they are distinct in application

Basis	Pith and Substance	Severability
Question asked	Which List does this law *really* belong to?	Can the valid part of this law survive without the invalid part?
Trigger	Overlap/encroachment between Union-State legislative competence	Partial unconstitutionality (competence or rights violation) within one law

Outcome	Entire law upheld (if dominant purpose is intra vires)	Only the offending portion struck down; rest preserved
Applies to	Centre-State legislative competence disputes specifically	Any constitutional infirmity (competence, or Part III rights violation)

CONCLUSION

Pith and Substance and Severability thus work as **complementary yet operationally distinct judicial instruments** — the former protecting a law's overall validity against incidental encroachment, the latter salvaging a law's valid core from a specific defect — together enabling India's Union-State legislative relations to function with practical flexibility rather than rigid textual formalism.

(b) District administration in India is characterised by the dichotomy between law and order maintenance and development management, even though both functions are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Explain. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the District Collector's dual colonial-origin role
2. BODY: Explain the two functions, the dichotomy/tension between them, then their actual interdependence with examples
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for structural reform rather than complete separation

INTRODUCTION

The **District Collector/Magistrate**, inherited from the colonial administrative structure, has historically combined two distinct roles — **law and order maintenance** (as District Magistrate, overseeing police, revenue courts, and public order) and **development management** (as head of district planning and scheme implementation) — a dual mandate that has generated an enduring administrative dichotomy despite the genuine interdependence of both functions.

BODY

The two functions

- **Law and order maintenance**: colonial-origin function focused on revenue collection, maintaining public order, supervising police (in many states), and exercising magisterial/judicial functions (preventive detention, crowd control, Section 144-type orders).
- **Development management**: post-independence addition, encompassing implementation of centrally-sponsored and state schemes (MGNREGA, PMAY, PM-Kisan), chairing District Planning Committees, and coordinating line departments for socio-economic development.

The dichotomy/tension

- **Divergent skill and orientation requirements**: law-and-order functions demand a regulatory, enforcement-oriented, often reactive administrative posture, while development management demands a facilitative, participatory, proactive orientation — creating role strain for a single officer.
- **Time and attention competition**: law-and-order emergencies (communal tension, protests, natural disasters) frequently divert Collector attention from sustained development planning, especially during politically sensitive periods (elections, festivals).
- **Second ARC's critique**: the **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission** flagged this dual burden as diluting the Collector's effectiveness in *both* roles, recommending consideration of separating regulatory and developmental functions, or at minimum strengthening dedicated development-focused district functionaries.
- **Colonial legacy mismatch**: the law-and-order-centric colonial Collector model was never originally designed for the participatory, welfare-state developmental role added after independence, creating a structural mismatch some scholars trace to persistent implementation gaps in rural development schemes.

Actual interdependence and mutual reinforcement

- **Law and order as a precondition for development**: without basic public order and dispute resolution (land disputes, communal harmony), development schemes cannot be effectively implemented — e.g., infrastructure projects routinely require law-and-order support for land acquisition and to manage local resistance.

- **Development as a preventer of law-and-order problems**: unemployment, poverty and unmet developmental expectations are well-documented drivers of social unrest, crime, and extremism — most tellingly, the combined security-and-development **SAMADHAN strategy** has coincided with **Left-Wing Extremism collapsing from 126 "LWE-affected" districts (2014) to a position where, as of April 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs classifies not a single district as "LWE-affected"** (only one residual "District of Concern" and 37 "Legacy & Thrust" districts remain, with reported incidents falling from 330 across 76 districts in 2013 to 52 across 22 districts by mid-2025) — concrete evidence that combining security presence with roads, connectivity and welfare delivery, rather than either alone, directly reduces the law-and-order burden over time.
- **Coordinated crisis response**: disaster management (discussed elsewhere in this paper) exemplifies how the Collector's dual authority — enforcement powers for evacuation/relief and developmental resources for rehabilitation — must function as one integrated response, not two separate tracks.

CONCLUSION

While the law-and-order/development dichotomy reflects a genuine structural and attentional tension inherited from colonial administrative design, the two functions are in substance **deeply interdependent** — the way forward, as the 2nd ARC suggested, lies not in complete bifurcation but in **strengthening dedicated developmental support structures** (empowered CEOs of Zilla Parishads, technical planning cells) around the Collector, rather than diluting the office's essential coordinating authority.

(c) Trace the reasons for growing incidences of disagreements between the Governors and state governments. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the Governor's constitutional position
2. BODY: Trace, phase by phase, how the reasons for conflict have accumulated from the Constitution's framing to the 2025 judicial flashpoint
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need to codify discretionary conventions

INTRODUCTION

The **Governor**, appointed by the President under Article 155 and holding office "during the pleasure of the President" (Article 156), occupies a constitutionally ambiguous dual position — a nominal constitutional head bound by ministerial aid and advice (Article 163), yet vested with certain discretionary powers; tracing how this founding ambiguity has hardened into recurrent conflict shows a clear, escalating trajectory rather than a single static cause.

BODY

Tracing the reasons — from constitutional design to the present

1. **1950 — the root cause is built in at drafting**: Articles 155/156/163/200 leave the Governor's discretion undefined and tenure unfixed ("during the pleasure of the President"), a deliberate ambiguity that stayed largely dormant only because one-party (Congress) dominance at both Centre and in most states meant Governor-Chief Minister friction was structurally rare before the late 1960s.
2. **Post-1967 — discretion becomes politically live**: as non-Congress state governments multiplied after the 1967 general election, Governors' discretionary role in recommending President's Rule and timing floor tests began to be actively exercised for the first time on a large scale — prompting the **Sarkaria Commission (1988)** to formally flag the office's politicisation and recommend a consultative, insulated appointment process.
3. **1990s-2000s — new fronts open under coalition politics**: continuing Centre-state party mismatches added fresh flashpoints — disputes over **Vice-Chancellor appointments** to state universities (Governors acting as ex-officio Chancellor) and Governors' reports on law-and-order/constitutional-machinery breakdown — even as *S.R. Bommai (1994)* narrowed, without eliminating, misuse of Article 356 recommendations; the **Punchhi Commission (2010)** reiterated Sarkaria's warnings, by now unheeded for over two decades.
4. **Post-2014 — Bill-assent delay becomes the dominant flashpoint**: with sharper Centre-state political polarisation, Governors sitting indefinitely on passed legislation without according assent, returning it, or reserving it for the President (Article 200) became the central grievance — litigated through the 2020s by Tamil

Nadu, Kerala, Punjab and Telangana — precisely because no constitutional deadline for gubernatorial action had ever been fixed at any earlier stage of this trajectory.

5. **April 2025 — the flashpoint reaches the Supreme Court**: this culminated in the **judgment in State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu**, where the Court, invoking Article 142, prescribed strict outer timelines for gubernatorial action and held that continued inaction beyond them would result in **"deemed assent."**

6. **2025-26 — a corrective course-adjustment**: the ruling proved contentious enough to trigger a **Presidential Reference under Article 143**; in the resulting **Special Reference 2025** opinion, a Constitution Bench **stepped back from the Tamil Nadu ruling** — holding that "as soon as possible" in Articles 200/201 cannot be a rigid judicial timeline, that there can be **no "deemed assent"** absent a fixed expiry point, and that invoking Article 142 to compel assent risked pre-judging legislation before it became law. The Court preserved only a **narrow window for judicial review** over "prolonged, unexplained and indefinite" inaction — meaning the tenure-security and appointment-process ambiguities identified at Stage 1 and flagged by Sarkaria/Punchhi remain, even now, judicially unresolved.

Running through every stage of this trace is the same **structural thread**: the "pleasure of the President" doctrine, with no minimum term or independent removal process, leaves Governors politically exposed and incentivised to align with the Union government of the day — the underlying cause the political and judicial flashpoints at each phase have only ever addressed symptomatically.

CONCLUSION

Traced from its 1950 constitutional origin through the Sarkaria/Punchhi warnings to the 2025 judgment-and-advisory-opinion sequence, Governor-state friction emerges not as a sudden phenomenon but as the **cumulative, escalating consequence of an appointment-process and tenure-security ambiguity left unresolved at every stage** — one that now increasingly requires either constitutional amendment or a firm, codified set of conventions, since courts have just signalled the limits of what judicial timelines alone can fix.

SECTION B

Q5. Answer the following in about 150 words each: 10×5=50

(a) Lateral Entry in Government of India has not moved in the intended direction. Explain the reasons. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the rationale and origin of Lateral Entry
2. BODY: Explain the intended objective, then the reasons it has faltered
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need to redesign, not abandon, the scheme

INTRODUCTION

Lateral Entry — the direct induction of domain experts from the private sector, academia and PSUs into senior/middle-level government positions (Joint Secretary and Director/Deputy Secretary ranks) — was formally introduced in **2018** by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), premised on the 2nd ARC's recommendation to inject specialist expertise into a generalist-dominated bureaucracy.

BODY

Intended objective: to bring specialised domain knowledge (finance, technology, infrastructure) into policy-making roles traditionally monopolised by generalist IAS officers, improving governance quality in technically complex sectors.

Reasons it has not moved in the intended direction

- **Very limited scale**: only about **63 lateral entrants** have been appointed across ministries/departments since the scheme began in 2018 against the vast size of the central bureaucracy — far short of the systemic capacity infusion originally envisaged.
- **Political and social opposition**: criticism that lateral entry **bypasses the constitutionally-mandated reservation policy** for SC/ST/OBC candidates (since these appointments are typically made outside the regular UPSC-reservation framework) has generated sustained political resistance, culminating in the **August 2024 episode** where a UPSC advertisement for 45 fresh lateral-entry posts was withdrawn on the Prime Minister's directive after cross-party backlash. As of the latest available position, **fresh recruitment has not resumed**: government's response has instead been confined to extending the tenure of 17 already-serving lateral recruits (December 2024) by 1-2 years, while the promised reservation-inclusive redesign of the scheme remains pending — underscoring that the "intended direction" (scaled, specialist capacity infusion) has, if anything, stalled rather than advanced in the two years since the controversy.
- **Integration challenges**: lateral entrants often face difficulty navigating entrenched bureaucratic hierarchy, file-based decision culture and resistance from career civil servants, limiting their effective influence.
- **Short, contractual tenures** (typically 3-5 years) undermine institutional memory-building and long-term policy ownership by lateral entrants.
- **Absence of a transparent, standardised selection and evaluation framework** initially raised concerns about opacity and potential favouritism in appointments.
- **Lack of a clear post-tenure career pathway** discourages high-quality private-sector talent from taking the risk of a temporary government stint.

CONCLUSION

Lateral entry's underlying rationale — infusing specialist capacity — remains sound and increasingly necessary in a technically complex governance environment; what is needed is not abandonment but a **redesigned, transparent, suitably-scaled and socially-inclusive framework** that can overcome the political and institutional resistance it has faced.

(b) Though seldom enacted, Cut Motions remain vital instruments of parliamentary accountability. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Define Cut Motions and their place in the budgetary process
2. BODY: Establish the three types, then comment on why their accountability value survives despite rarely passing
3. CONCLUSION: End with Cut Motions as a symbolic but essential accountability tool

INTRODUCTION

Cut Motions are parliamentary devices used during discussion on the **Demands for Grants** (the budgetary process) through which any Member of Parliament may move to reduce a proposed expenditure, formally testing the government's fiscal proposals against legislative scrutiny — a key instrument of **legislative control over the executive purse** (Article 113).

BODY

Types of Cut Motions

1. **Policy Cut**: seeks to reduce a demand to ₹1, symbolising outright disapproval of the policy underlying the expenditure.
2. **Economy Cut**: seeks a specific reduction in the demand, representing a call for economy in expenditure.
3. **Token Cut**: seeks a nominal reduction of ₹100, used to ventilate a specific grievance within the government's administrative responsibility, without opposing the policy itself.

Comment — why they remain vital despite seldom being enacted

- In a **majority-government, party-whip system**, Cut Motions are almost never actually passed, since the ruling party's numerical strength ensures their defeat — yet their **discursive and symbolic value survives independently of the voting outcome**.
- They **compel the government to publicly defend and justify** every line of proposed expenditure on the floor of the House, embodying the principle of "no taxation/expenditure without accountability."
- They provide the **Opposition a formal, time-bound platform** to highlight policy failures, administrative lapses or specific grievances tied to a ministry's budget, generating public and media scrutiny even without formal passage.
- A carried cut motion is treated as a **vote of no-confidence** since it signals the House's rejection of a Demand for Grant — their extreme rarity (governments with a working majority almost never lose one) is itself precisely why the few historical instances of a cut motion actually being carried remain landmark moments in India's parliamentary history, demonstrating their **residual capacity to trigger a genuine confidence test**.
- They form part of the broader **parliamentary financial control toolkit** alongside Question Hour, Zero Hour, and Standing Committee scrutiny of Demands for Grants — together ensuring the executive's spending remains under continuous legislative gaze.

CONCLUSION

Cut Motions thus exemplify how parliamentary accountability operates as much through **visibility and deliberation** as through actual voting outcomes — their rare passage does not diminish, but rather underscores, their enduring value as a structured check on executive financial power.

(c) Administrative reforms in India have been a double-edged sword. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the twin promise and peril of administrative reform
2. BODY: Present the positive and negative edges of major reforms with examples
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for calibrated, context-sensitive reform design

INTRODUCTION

Administrative reforms in India — from the **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (2005-09)** recommendations to more recent measures like RTI, disinvestment, lateral entry and digital governance — have consistently delivered genuine efficiency and transparency gains, while simultaneously generating unintended costs, making them a genuine **"double-edged sword."**

BODY

The positive edge

- **RTI Act, 2005**: dramatically enhanced transparency and citizen empowerment against arbitrary administrative action.
- **e-Governance/DBT**: reduced leakage in welfare delivery and cut discretionary contact points prone to corruption (PFMS, Aadhaar-enabled transfers).
- **Disinvestment/corporatisation**: improved efficiency and reduced fiscal burden of loss-making PSUs.
- **Lateral entry/Mission Karmayogi**: aim to inject specialist capacity and competency-based training into a generalist bureaucracy.

The negative/double edge

- **RTI**: also generates administrative burden through frivolous or voluminous requests, and has in several instances been misused to target/harass officials, occasionally chilling honest decision-making ("**decision paralysis**").
- **Disinvestment**: while improving efficiency, has raised concerns over job security, strategic-sector control, and, in some cases, under-valuation of public assets sold.
- **Lateral entry**: efficiency gains offset by reservation-policy controversy and integration difficulties (as discussed in Q5(a)).
- **Digital governance/DBT**: exclusion of citizens lacking digital literacy or connectivity ("**digital divide**") risks defeating the very inclusion the reform intended.
- **Performance-based/output-linked reforms** (echoing NPM critiques globally) can incentivise **gaming of metrics** rather than genuine service-quality improvement if poorly designed.

Underlying reason for the double-edge: reforms are often **transplanted from other contexts** (Western NPM models, private-sector practices) without adequate adaptation to India's socio-administrative ecology (echoing Riggs's ecological critique), or implemented without adequate safeguards against misuse.

CONCLUSION

Administrative reform in India is thus best approached not as an unqualified good but as a **double-edged instrument** requiring careful, context-sensitive design and continuous course-correction — reform for reform's sake, without attention to unintended consequences, risks undermining the very governance improvement it seeks.

(d) Ease of living index lays the foundation for data driven approach to urban planning. Analyse critically. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Introduce the Ease of Living Index
2. BODY: Explain its structure and data-driven value, then critically analyse its limitations
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced verdict on its foundational but incomplete role

INTRODUCTION

The **Ease of Living Index (EoLI)**, launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (first in 2018, updated 2020), ranks Indian cities on quality of life, economic ability and sustainability, explicitly designed to shift urban governance from **anecdotal, ad hoc decision-making toward a data-driven, evidence-based approach**.

BODY

Structure enabling data-driven planning

- Built on **three pillars**: Quality of Life (health, education, safety, housing), Economic Ability (employment, economic development), and Sustainability (environment, resource management, resilience) — each with granular, measurable indicators.

- Complemented by the **Municipal Performance Index**, assessing city governments on service-delivery efficiency, providing city administrators comparative, benchmarked data.
- Enables **evidence-based prioritisation**: cities can identify specific deficient indicators (e.g., waste management, green cover) and target interventions precisely, rather than generic city planning — in the most recent (2020) round, **Bengaluru topped the million-plus-population category** and **Shimla topped the less-than-million category**, giving city administrators a concrete, published benchmark rather than an abstract quality-of-life aspiration.

Critical limitations

- **Data quality and self-reporting concerns**: much of the underlying data is self-reported by Urban Local Bodies, raising concerns about accuracy, gaming, and inconsistent measurement standards across cities.
- **Overemphasis on ranking/competition**: risks encouraging cities to optimise for **index performance rather than substantive citizen welfare** — a classic Goodhart's Law problem ("when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure").
- **Limited coverage**: the index largely covers larger, statutory cities, leaving small towns and peri-urban/rural-urban transition areas — where India's fastest urbanisation is occurring — under-represented in the data foundation.
- **Static snapshot vs. dynamic planning need**: periodic index publication does not substitute for the **continuous, real-time data infrastructure** (GIS-based master planning, live traffic/utility data) that genuinely dynamic urban planning requires.
- **Weak linkage to actual budgetary/planning processes**: index findings do not always translate into binding master-plan revisions or budgetary reallocation, limiting practical impact.

CONCLUSION

The Ease of Living Index is a genuinely valuable **first step toward data-driven urban governance**, but it lays only a partial foundation — sustainable, inclusive urban planning additionally requires robust real-time data infrastructure, independent data verification, and stronger institutional linkage between index findings and actual municipal planning/budgeting.

(e) Ethical and privacy issues limit the emerging use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by police to combat cyber crimes. Comment. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with AI's growing role in cyber-crime policing
2. BODY: Establish AI applications, then comment on the ethical/privacy concerns limiting them
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for a regulatory-ethical framework alongside technological adoption

INTRODUCTION

As cyber-crime has grown exponentially in scale and sophistication, Indian police forces have increasingly turned to **Artificial Intelligence** — facial recognition, predictive analytics, and automated digital-forensics tools — to detect, investigate and prevent offences, but this adoption remains constrained by significant unresolved **ethical and privacy concerns**.

BODY

Emerging AI applications in policing

- **National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRIS/AFRS)**: used to identify suspects from CCTV/database imagery.
- **Predictive policing tools**: analyse crime-pattern data to forecast hotspots and allocate resources.
- **AI-based digital forensics**: automated malware analysis, dark-web monitoring, and cyber-fraud pattern detection.

Comment — the ethical and privacy issues limiting adoption

- **Right to Privacy as a fundamental right**: following *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)*, any state surveillance/data-processing action must satisfy the tests of **legality, necessity and proportionality** — most AI policing tools currently operate without a dedicated statutory framework meeting this standard.

- **Algorithmic bias**: facial-recognition and predictive-policing systems have globally demonstrated higher error rates for certain demographic groups, risking discriminatory targeting if deployed without rigorous, India-specific bias audits.
- **Absence of a dedicated police-AI regulatory framework**: the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** governs data processing generally, and the long-awaited **Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025** (notified by MeitY on 14 November 2025) have now operationalised it — prescribing consent/notice standards, breach-reporting timelines, and the composition of the Data Protection Board — but the Rules remain focused on private/commercial data fiduciaries; specific, codified safeguards for **law-enforcement AI use** (data-retention limits for facial-recognition/predictive-policing datasets, purpose limitation, independent oversight of police data processing) remain comparatively underdeveloped even under the notified Rules.
- **Lack of transparency/explainability**: "black-box" AI decision-making complicates due process, since an accused's right to contest evidence is undermined if the reasoning behind an algorithmic identification cannot be meaningfully explained.
- **Function creep risk**: tools built for cyber-crime investigation risk expanding into broader, unchecked surveillance without adequate legislative or judicial oversight.
- **Chilling effect on civil liberties**: pervasive AI surveillance, even if crime-reducing, risks disproportionately curbing legitimate digital freedoms and dissent.

CONCLUSION

Realising AI's genuine potential in combating sophisticated cyber-crime requires India to move in tandem on **technological capability and a dedicated ethical-legal framework** — data-protection safeguards, bias audits, and independent oversight — without which AI-enabled policing risks trading one form of crime for another form of rights violation.

Q6. (a) Civil services is grappling with severe capacity issues and which is a major bottleneck in implementing ambitious programmes across sectors. Mission Karmayogi can only supplement but not solve the entire capacity constraint. Give your opinion. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the capacity crisis in Indian civil services
2. BODY: Explain the dimensions of the capacity problem, then Mission Karmayogi's design and its limits, with opinion
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced opinion — necessary but insufficient

INTRODUCTION

India's civil services face a well-documented **capacity crisis** — spanning vacancies, skill mismatches, and generalist-specialist imbalance — that has become a central bottleneck in implementing increasingly complex, technology-intensive governance programmes; **Mission Karmayogi (National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, NPCSCB, 2020)** was launched precisely to address this, but its design suggests it can meaningfully supplement, though not fully resolve, the underlying constraint.

BODY

Dimensions of the capacity problem

- **Chronic vacancies**: significant shortfalls in sanctioned civil-service strength across All-India Services and central/state departments directly constrain implementation bandwidth.
- **Generalist-specialist mismatch**: the IAS-dominated generalist model, while valuable for coordination, often lacks the deep technical expertise required for domains like data science, climate policy, or complex infrastructure finance — a gap only partially addressed by limited lateral entry (see Q5a).
- **Training deficit**: pre-2020, civil-service training was largely front-loaded (at entry, via institutions like LBSNAA) with limited systematic, continuous, competency-based mid-career upskilling.
- **Fragmented HR management**: postings, transfers and capacity deployment historically lacked a unified, data-driven, competency-matched approach — officers often placed in roles misaligned with demonstrated skill or interest.
- **Rising complexity of governance tasks**: as programmes increasingly require digital, financial and cross-sectoral expertise (e.g., PM GatiShakti's logistics-data integration, Digital India's technology stack), the sheer complexity has outpaced traditional generalist training.

Mission Karmayogi's design and contribution

- Establishes a **competency-based framework**: for the first time, formally mapping roles to required functional, domain and behavioural competencies across the civil service.
- **iGOT Karmayogi platform**: an online, continuous learning platform enabling scalable, role-specific, on-demand training — a genuine innovation over the earlier one-time institutional training model. By **August 2026**, the platform had crossed **1.7 crore registered users** across all Union ministries/departments and every State/UT, offering over **5,600 courses** (including 218 dedicated to AI and emerging technologies, and 1,433 courses in Hindi/regional languages across 23 languages) and recording over **7.3 crore course enrolments** and **3.35 crore completions** — with newly introduced AI-driven features (iGOT AI Tutor, AI Sarthi) aimed at personalising the learning pathway, evidence of genuinely rapid scale-up of the training-delivery infrastructure since 2020.
- **Capacity Building Commission**: an independent body to harmonise training standards, create shared faculty resources, and audit training effectiveness across ministries — addressing the earlier fragmentation.
- Shifts civil-service HR philosophy from **"rule-based" to "role-competency-based"** management, aiming for better person-role fit.

Why it can only supplement, not solve, the entire constraint (opinion)

- **Vacancy and recruitment-scale issues lie outside Mission Karmayogi's mandate**: training existing officers better cannot substitute for the sheer numerical shortfall in sanctioned strength — that requires recruitment-policy and cadre-review reform, a distinct lever.
- **Structural generalist-specialist balance is a recruitment/cadre-design issue**, not primarily a training issue — Mission Karmayogi can upskill generalists but cannot by itself resolve the deeper debate on whether India

needs a larger dedicated specialist cadre stream (an issue lateral entry was meant to address, itself facing the constraints discussed in Q5a).

- **Political-culture-driven transfer instability** (discussed in Q2b) undermines the very continuity that competency-building requires — a well-trained officer transferred every 12-18 months cannot apply deepened expertise effectively, regardless of training quality.
- **Implementation capacity also depends on state-level administrative machinery**, especially below the All-India Services (state civil services, local-body functionaries), where Mission Karmayogi's initial rollout focus has been comparatively limited.
- **Cultural/behavioural change is slow**: shifting from a rule-compliance to an outcome-and-competency mindset requires sustained institutional reinforcement (appraisal-system alignment, promotion-linkage) well beyond a training platform's direct reach.

CONCLUSION

In my assessment, Mission Karmayogi represents a **genuinely necessary and well-designed intervention** — the first systematic attempt to professionalise civil-service capacity-building in independent India — but it addresses primarily the **training and competency-mapping dimension** of a much broader capacity crisis rooted equally in recruitment scale, cadre structure, tenure stability and state-level administrative strengthening; it must therefore be paired with complementary reforms on these fronts to meaningfully resolve, rather than merely supplement, India's civil-service capacity constraint.

(b) Public debt of states in India has increased significantly in the last one decade. In this context discuss the constraints of the states in planning prudent fiscal management. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the trend of rising state public debt
2. BODY: Explain the drivers of rising debt, then the structural constraints states face in fiscal management
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for coordinated fiscal federalism reform

INTRODUCTION

State governments' **public debt-to-GSDP ratios** have risen significantly over the past decade, with several states now well above the fiscally prudent benchmark recommended by successive Finance Commissions, raising serious concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability and states' capacity for prudent fiscal management within India's federal structure.

BODY

Drivers of rising state public debt

- **Off-budget borrowing**: states increasingly borrowed through state-owned corporations/special purpose vehicles to circumvent FRBM deficit ceilings, understating true liabilities until recent reforms brought greater disclosure.
- **Power-sector subsidies and discom losses**: chronic financial distress in state electricity distribution companies, only partially addressed by schemes like UDAY (Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana), has required repeated state fiscal bailouts.
- **Pension liabilities**: several states reverting to the **Old Pension Scheme (OPS)** from the National Pension System (NPS) have created substantial unfunded future pension obligations, a long-term fiscal risk not always reflected in current-year deficit figures.
- **Competitive populism**: election-cycle-driven welfare announcements (loan waivers, subsidised electricity/transport) discussed in Q3(c)'s competitive-federalism context add recurring, non-capital expenditure commitments.
- **COVID-19 pandemic shock**: pandemic-related revenue collapse combined with emergency expenditure needs sharply increased borrowing across nearly all states.
- **GST compensation transition**: the end of the assured GST compensation period (originally guaranteed for five years post-GST rollout) removed a previously reliable revenue-stabilisation cushion for many states.

What the numbers show — 16th Finance Commission and NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index 2026

- The **16th Finance Commission** (Chairperson Dr Arvind Panagariya; award period 2026-31, report tabled February 2026) recommended retaining the **41% vertical devolution** share to states, along with grants-in-aid of roughly **₹9.47 lakh crore** over its award period, but — significantly for this question — it also explicitly recommended that states **maintain a fiscal-deficit ceiling of 3% of GSDP** and, crucially, **"strictly discontinue the practice of off-budget borrowing,"** directing that all such liabilities be brought onto official budget books — a direct institutional response to exactly the debt-sustainability concerns this question raises.
- **NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026**, released around the same time, empirically validates the concern: it ranked **Odisha first** among 18 major states (aided substantially by mining-royalty revenue rather than tax buoyancy), while **Tamil Nadu and Kerala fell into the "Aspirational" (lowest-performing) tier** — Tamil Nadu scored just **32 out of 100 on expenditure quality against Odisha's 52**, and the index specifically flagged **Kerala's use of an off-budget special purpose vehicle (Kerala Social Security Pension Limited)** to borrow "off the official books" for welfare-pension funding — a structure the **CAG itself has classified as a transparency failure** — as the kind of disclosure gap the 16th FC's off-budget-borrowing recommendation directly targets.
- Reinforcing this accountability concern at the Union level too, the **CAG's FY25 audit report** (2026) flagged **₹12,754.47 crore in expenditure misclassification** and **₹54,282.32 crore in pending utilisation certificates** in central accounts — underscoring that fiscal-transparency weaknesses examined by independent audit institutions are not confined to states alone, but reflect a broader accountability gap across India's fiscal federal architecture that both the CAG and the Finance Commission are now converging on flagging.

Constraints states face in planning prudent fiscal management

- **Limited own tax-revenue autonomy**: GST subsumed most significant state indirect-tax powers into a shared, Council-determined structure, narrowing states' independent fiscal-policy levers compared to the pre-GST era.
- **FRBM ceilings without matching flexibility**: states must operate within fiscal-deficit limits recommended by the Finance Commission, even though their expenditure obligations (health, education, welfare, and salary/pension commitments) are relatively inflexible and rising.
- **Vertical fiscal imbalance**: states bear a disproportionate share of actual expenditure responsibility relative to their independent revenue-raising capacity, structurally increasing reliance on Union transfers and, when those fall short, borrowing.
- **Interest-burden ratchet effect**: rising debt stock increases interest payment obligations, consuming an ever-larger share of revenue receipts and further squeezing the fiscal space available for capital/developmental expenditure — a classic debt-spiral risk.
- **Weak medium-term fiscal planning capacity**: many states lack robust, technically capable fiscal-planning institutions comparable to the Union's Department of Economic Affairs, limiting their ability to model long-term liability trajectories (especially pension and contingent guarantees).
- **Political-economy pressure toward short-termism**: as discussed under competitive federalism and political culture, electoral incentives systematically favour visible, immediate expenditure over prudent, long-horizon fiscal management.

CONCLUSION

Rising state public debt reflects a **structural mismatch between states' expenditure responsibilities and their fiscal autonomy/planning capacity** within India's evolving federal fiscal architecture; addressing it sustainably requires coordinated reform — greater transparency in off-budget borrowing (a direction the **16th Finance Commission** has now formally recommended and NITI Aayog's **Fiscal Health Index** is beginning to enforce through reputational/comparative pressure), rationalised subsidy design, and strengthened state-level fiscal-planning institutions — rather than fiscal discipline being expected of states in isolation from these structural constraints.

(c) Community based Disaster Risk Management is a response to the gaps within the existing Disaster Risk Management strategy. Evaluate. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with India's shift from relief-centric to risk-management-centric disaster policy
2. BODY: Explain the gaps in the top-down model, then how Community-Based DRM addresses them, with examples
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced evaluation — necessary complement, not a substitute

INTRODUCTION

India's disaster-management framework shifted decisively from a **relief-and-response-centric** approach to a **holistic risk-reduction** paradigm following the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** (which established the National Disaster Management Authority) and India's adoption of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)**; **Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)** emerged as a direct response to persistent gaps in this still-largely top-down institutional model.

BODY

Gaps in the existing (top-down) Disaster Risk Management strategy

- **Centralised, bureaucratic response chain**: NDMA-SDMA-DDMA hierarchy, while institutionally sound, often results in delayed last-mile response, since decision-making and resource mobilisation must pass through multiple administrative layers.
- **Limited local/indigenous knowledge integration**: top-down planning frequently underutilises communities' own traditional early-warning practices, local hazard knowledge, and social-network-based evacuation capacity.
- **Weak pre-disaster preparedness at the grassroots**: institutional focus has historically skewed toward post-disaster relief/response rather than sustained community-level mitigation and preparedness.
- **One-size-fits-all planning**: standardised district/state disaster-management plans often fail to capture hyper-local vulnerability variations (specific flood-prone hamlets, cyclone-exposed coastal clusters).

How Community-Based DRM addresses these gaps

- **Local ownership and rapid response**: trained community volunteers (e.g., under the **Aapda Mitra scheme**) can act immediately during the "golden hours" after a disaster, before formal administrative machinery mobilises.
- **Integration of traditional knowledge**: CBDRM explicitly incorporates local hazard knowledge (e.g., traditional flood-warning signs, community-maintained shelters) alongside scientific early-warning systems.
- **Panchayati Raj Institution integration**: linking disaster planning to PRIs (Gram Panchayat Disaster Management Plans) builds preparedness into existing local-governance structures rather than treating disaster management as an external, specialist function.
- **Vulnerability-sensitive micro-planning**: community-level risk mapping captures hyper-local variation that state/district plans cannot, enabling more precisely targeted mitigation investment.
- **Resilience-building beyond response**: shifts focus toward sustained community capacity — mock drills, local disaster-management committees, community-maintained resources — consistent with the Sendai Framework's "**build back better**" and preparedness-first philosophy.

Evaluation

- CBDRM has demonstrably improved response speed and community resilience in disaster-prone areas: Odisha's model, refined since Cyclone Phailin (2013), was validated again during **Cyclone Dana (October 2024)** — over 170,000 people evacuated in a coordinated community-institutional operation, with **no human casualties reported** despite the cyclone's severity, a result the state government directly credited to trained community volunteers and pre-positioned local shelters working alongside NDRF/SDRF teams.
- However, CBDRM alone cannot substitute for institutional capacity — large-scale disasters (major earthquakes, widespread flooding) still require the scientific forecasting, inter-agency coordination and resource mobilisation that only the NDMA-SDMA-DDMA institutional structure can provide.

CONCLUSION

Community-Based Disaster Risk Management is thus best evaluated as a **necessary and effective complement**, not a substitute, addressing the top-down system's last-mile, preparedness and local-knowledge gaps — genuine disaster resilience requires the institutional and community approaches to function as an integrated whole, precisely the direction India's post-Sendai policy framework is now pursuing.

Q7. (a) Supreme Court of India in Prakash Singh case laid the foundation for effective police reforms in India, but the states have frittered the opportunity. Discuss. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the Prakash Singh judgment's background
2. BODY: Explain the seven directives, then discuss states' non-compliance in detail
3. CONCLUSION: End with the need for renewed judicial/political push

INTRODUCTION

In ***Prakash Singh v. Union of India* (2006)**, the Supreme Court, responding to a decade-long PIL highlighting political interference and lack of accountability in policing, issued **seven binding directives** to insulate the police from arbitrary political control and improve accountability — a landmark intervention that, nearly two decades on, states have substantially failed to implement in both letter and spirit.

BODY

The seven directives of Prakash Singh

1. Constitute a **State Security Commission (SSC)** to lay down policy and ensure the state government does not exercise unwarranted influence over police.
2. Ensure **DGP selection** through a merit-based UPSC panel process, with a minimum tenure.
3. Ensure **minimum tenure of two years** for key operational police officers (SP/SHO level) to prevent arbitrary, politically-motivated transfers.
4. **Separate investigation from law-and-order functions** to improve investigative professionalism and speed.
5. Establish a **Police Establishment Board (PEB)** for transparent transfers, postings and promotions.
6. Set up **Police Complaints Authorities (PCAs)** at state and district level for accountability against police misconduct.
7. Constitute a **National Security Commission** for the selection and placement of chiefs of Central Armed Police Forces.

How states have frittered the opportunity

- **Diluted or cosmetic SSCs**: many states either did not constitute State Security Commissions at all, or structured them (through composition and advisory-only powers) in ways that preserve effective executive control rather than genuinely insulating policy-making from political interference — several state SSCs remain toothless bodies rarely convened.
- **Circumvented DGP selection process**: states have adopted various strategies — appointing "acting" DGPs indefinitely, or altering eligibility criteria to control the UPSC panel's composition — to retain effective discretion over DGP appointment, defeating the directive's purpose.
- **Continued short, politically-driven tenures**: despite the two-year minimum-tenure directive, frequent, politically-motivated transfers of police officers remain endemic across most states, as flagged repeatedly in subsequent contempt petitions before the Supreme Court.
- **Nominal or absent investigation-law/order separation**: resource constraints and administrative convenience have meant that in practice, most police stations continue to combine both functions, with separation implemented only partially in a few metropolitan areas.
- **Weak or non-functional Police Complaints Authorities**: many state PCAs lack independent staffing, adequate powers, or public awareness, rendering the citizen-accountability mechanism largely ineffective in practice.
- **States enacting new Police Acts to bypass the spirit of the directives**: several states passed new Police Acts post-2006 that formally reference the directives' language while structurally preserving executive control — a widely-documented pattern of "**compliance in form, evasion in substance**."
- **Continuing contempt proceedings**: the Supreme Court's monitoring committee and periodic contempt petitions demonstrate that even the Court's continuing oversight has achieved only partial, uneven compliance across states nearly two decades later.
- **Independent compliance assessments confirm the pattern**: the **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)**'s comprehensive nationwide compliance assessment found that even **fourteen years after the 2006**

judgment, no state or Union Territory had fully implemented all seven directives — with a small cluster of states (Kerala, Meghalaya, Tripura among them) showing comparatively better, though still partial, compliance (functioning Police Establishment Boards, more genuine tenure protection), while several large states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh prominent among them) showed the weakest compliance, particularly on DGP-selection insulation and Police Complaints Authority functionality. Subsequent CHRI compliance notes and continuing contempt petitions before the Supreme Court indicate this uneven, state-by-state pattern of "selective, cosmetic compliance" has persisted rather than meaningfully closed in the years since.

Underlying reasons for non-compliance

- Political executives across party lines have a structural incentive to retain control over the police for both **legitimate law-and-order coordination** and **less legitimate political uses** (surveillance of opposition, protection of ruling-party interests), creating bipartisan reluctance to cede this control regardless of which party governs a state.
- Police reform, being a **State List subject** (police falls under Entry 2, State List), gives the Union limited direct enforcement power beyond the Supreme Court's own contempt jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

The Prakash Singh judgment provided a **sound, comprehensive blueprint** for depoliticised, accountable policing, but its fate illustrates a recurring pattern in Indian administrative reform (echoing the "double-edged sword" and "political-will" themes elsewhere in this paper) — sound institutional design without sustained political will and enforcement mechanisms risks being reduced to formal, cosmetic compliance rather than substantive reform.

(b) Disconnect between the rural development institutions and state level agencies have led to each operating in silos at both levels resulting in inefficiencies. Find the reasons. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the intended convergence model of rural development
2. BODY: Explain the institutional landscape, then the reasons for the silo problem
3. CONCLUSION: End with the case for genuine convergence architecture

INTRODUCTION

India's rural development architecture — spanning elected **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**, state-level line departments, and central/state rural-development agencies — was constitutionally envisioned (73rd Amendment) to function as an integrated, convergent system, but persistent institutional fragmentation has instead produced a well-documented pattern of **silo-based, disconnected operation** at both state and local levels.

BODY

The institutional landscape

- **Panchayati Raj Institutions** (Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad): elected bodies with constitutional mandate over 29 subjects under the Eleventh Schedule, including rural development.
- **State-level rural development departments/agencies**: implement centrally-sponsored schemes (MGNREGA, PMAY-G, NRLM/DAY, PM-Gram Sadak Yojana) often through their own dedicated administrative machinery — DAY-NRLM alone had, as of 2025-26, mobilised over **10 crore women into roughly 90 lakh Self-Help Groups** nationally, an implementation scale run substantially through its own SHG-federation architecture rather than through Panchayat institutions.
- **Erstwhile District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs)**: historically parallel bodies implementing rural-development schemes largely independent of PRIs, though post-2015 many states have moved to merge/align DRDA functions with Zilla Parishads — with uneven implementation.

Reasons for the silo problem

- **Incomplete devolution of the 3Fs (Funds, Functions, Functionaries)**: as discussed in Q1(d), while functions are nominally devolved to PRIs, funds and functionaries frequently remain under state department control, meaning line departments continue independent scheme implementation without genuine PRI involvement.
- **Scheme-specific vertical silos**: centrally-sponsored schemes each come with their own guidelines, reporting formats, monitoring dashboards and (often) dedicated implementation staff/societies, creating scheme-wise

vertical silos that rarely coordinate horizontally at the district/block level, even when targeting overlapping beneficiary populations.

- **Absence of functional District Planning Committees**: as noted in Q1(d), DPCs — the constitutionally intended integration mechanism — remain weak or dysfunctional in most states, leaving no effective institutional forum where PRI plans and state-agency schemes are genuinely reconciled.
- **Capacity and technical-expertise gap in PRIs**: elected local representatives and Panchayat staff often lack the technical/planning capacity to engage as equal partners with specialised state-line-department officials, reinforcing the latter's tendency to operate independently.
- **Divergent accountability lines**: PRI functionaries are accountable to elected local bodies and, ultimately, the state Panchayati Raj department, while line-department field staff report through separate departmental hierarchies (Rural Development, Agriculture, Health) — with no unified district-level accountability structure forcing coordination.
- **Political-administrative tension**: state governments, wary of empowering potentially politically-independent local elected leadership (especially where PRI leadership is from an opposing party), have at times deliberately preferred routing development funds through bureaucratic line-department channels rather than PRIs.
- **Fragmented monitoring/MIS systems**: each scheme typically maintains its own separate management information system, preventing a unified, ground-level view of overlapping beneficiaries or convergent resource use (e.g., MGNREGA labour and PMAY-G housing construction could be technically converged but rarely are, in practice, tracked jointly).

CONCLUSION

The rural development silo problem thus stems from a **combination of incomplete constitutional devolution, scheme-design fragmentation, and capacity/accountability mismatches** between elected local bodies and state bureaucratic agencies — genuine efficiency gains require operationalising District Planning Committees, unifying scheme MIS platforms, and completing 3F devolution, rather than treating convergence as a mere administrative slogan.

(c) 'Zero tolerance against Corruption', commitment of Government of India has multi-pronged approach. Critically analyse. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the zero-tolerance policy commitment
2. BODY: Explain the multi-pronged instruments, then critically analyse gaps
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced critical verdict

INTRODUCTION

The Government of India's stated **"zero tolerance against corruption"** policy rests on a genuinely **multi-pronged institutional and legal architecture** spanning prevention, detection, investigation and punishment — yet its practical effectiveness remains contested when critically examined against implementation realities.

BODY

The multi-pronged approach

- **Legal framework**: the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** (significantly amended in **2018** to criminalise bribe-giving explicitly, not just bribe-taking, and to require prior sanction for prosecuting even retired officials for official-duty decisions) forms the core statutory instrument.
- **Institutional architecture**: the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**, **Lokpal** (operationalised following the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and Enforcement Directorate together form a layered investigation-oversight structure.
- **Prevention through reduced discretion**: Direct Benefit Transfer, GeM (Government e-Marketplace) procurement, faceless tax assessment, and Aadhaar-linked service delivery aim to structurally reduce person-to-person discretionary contact points that traditionally enabled petty corruption.

- **Financial-crime instruments**: the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)** and **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016** target the proceeds of corruption, not merely the underlying act.
- **Whistle-blower protection**: the **Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014** (though not yet fully notified/operationalised) aims to encourage internal reporting of corrupt practice.
- **Transparency instruments**: RTI Act and mandatory asset-disclosure requirements for public servants add a citizen-facing accountability layer.

Critical analysis

- **Implementation gaps**: the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 remains substantially unenforced years after enactment, illustrating the gap between legislative commitment and operational reality.
- **Institutional independence concerns**: CBI and ED have faced persistent criticism (including judicial observations, notably the Supreme Court's past characterisation of CBI as a "caged parrot") regarding susceptibility to political direction, undermining the credibility of "zero tolerance" enforcement, especially in politically sensitive cases.
- **2018 amendment's sanction requirement**: while intended to protect honest officials from harassment, requiring prior sanction to prosecute even retired officials for official decisions has been criticised as potentially shielding genuine corruption behind procedural delay.
- **Slow trial disposal**: chronic delays in corruption-case adjudication (special courts remain overburdened) mean that even successfully investigated cases often see conviction, if at all, only after many years, diluting deterrence.
- **Uneven focus — petty vs. grand corruption**: technology-driven reforms (DBT, e-procurement) have made genuine inroads against **petty, transactional corruption**, but **grand corruption** (high-level policy capture, crony favouritism in resource allocation) remains comparatively harder to detect and prosecute through the same instruments.
- **Positive but modest trend**: India improved to **rank 91 of 182 countries (score 39/100) in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2025**, up from rank 96 in 2024 — a genuine but incremental gain that still places India behind Bhutan and China, with the report specifically flagging weak judicial independence, opaque political financing, and inadequate procurement/budget oversight as persisting drags, even as DBT-linked leakage reduction shows the technology-driven prevention prong delivering measurable results.

CONCLUSION

The zero-tolerance commitment's multi-pronged design — spanning law, institutions, technology and transparency — is genuinely comprehensive on paper, and has delivered credible results specifically in reducing **petty, transactional corruption**; however, its critical weak links remain **institutional independence, prosecutorial delay, and the harder challenge of grand corruption**, meaning the "zero tolerance" claim is more substantiated in prevention than in punishment.

Q8. (a) Discuss the major management challenges faced by Indian Mega Cities and explore sustainable, inclusive urban development strategies for balanced future growth. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: Start with India's rapid, unplanned urbanisation
2. BODY: Discuss the major management challenges in a table, then explore strategies for sustainable/inclusive growth
3. CONCLUSION: End with integrated, decentralised urban governance as the way forward

INTRODUCTION

India's mega cities (Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and emerging million-plus agglomerations) are projected to house an ever-larger share of India's population — India's urban population is estimated to nearly double to around **600 million by 2036, roughly 40% of the total population** — yet their growth has substantially outpaced planned infrastructure and governance capacity, generating a distinctive set of management challenges that demand deliberate, sustainable and inclusive strategic response.

BODY

Major management challenges

Challenge	Manifestation
Housing shortage and slums	Large informal-settlement populations lacking secure tenure/basic services
Traffic congestion	Inadequate public transit relative to vehicle growth; long commute times
Air and water pollution	Among the world's most polluted cities; groundwater depletion
Solid waste management	Overflowing landfills, poor segregation/processing capacity
Fragmented urban governance	Multiple parastatals (development authorities, water boards, municipal corporations) with overlapping, uncoordinated mandates
Municipal finance weakness	Urban Local Bodies heavily dependent on state transfers, weak own-revenue base (property tax under-collection)
Climate vulnerability	Urban flooding (Chennai 2015, Bengaluru/Mumbai recurring), urban heat-island effect
Social exclusion	Spatial segregation of the urban poor, inadequate affordable housing near employment centres

Root institutional cause: the **74th Constitutional Amendment (1992)**, intended to empower Urban Local Bodies as genuine self-governing institutions (parallel to the 73rd Amendment for rural areas), remains substantially under-implemented — Metropolitan Planning Committees (Article 243ZE) are rarely functional, and city governance continues to be dominated by state-appointed parastatal development authorities rather than elected municipal governments.

Sustainable, inclusive strategies for balanced future growth

- **Strengthen genuine municipal empowerment**: operationalise Metropolitan Planning Committees and complete 3F devolution (funds, functions, functionaries) to Urban Local Bodies, addressing the governance fragmentation at its institutional root.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**: integrate land-use and transport planning around mass-transit corridors (metro/BRT) to reduce congestion and enable denser, more efficient land use — increasingly adopted in metro-expansion master plans.

- **Affordable and inclusive housing**: expand in-situ slum redevelopment (as opposed to peripheral relocation, which disconnects the urban poor from livelihoods) under schemes like PMAY-Urban, with tenure security as a foundational element.
- **Diversify municipal finance**: strengthen property-tax collection efficiency, explore value-capture financing (betterment levies, land monetisation around transit corridors) and municipal bonds to reduce dependence on state transfers.
- **Climate-resilient urban planning**: mandatory rainwater harvesting, restoration of urban wetlands/water bodies (to address recurring flooding), and green building codes.
- **Polycentric development**: developing satellite towns and secondary cities to relieve mega-city population pressure, consistent with the National Urban Policy Framework's emphasis on a more balanced urban hierarchy rather than mega-city-centric growth alone.
- **Data-driven governance**: extending Ease of Living Index-style data infrastructure (Q5d) into real-time urban management systems (traffic, utility, waste) for responsive, evidence-based city administration.
- **Participatory planning**: institutionalising ward committees and citizen participation in local area planning to ensure inclusive representation of informal-sector and low-income residents in city-development decisions.

CONCLUSION

Addressing India's mega-city management challenges sustainably requires moving beyond piecemeal, parastatal-driven infrastructure projects toward **genuinely empowered, adequately financed and participatory municipal governance** — the institutional reform envisaged by the 74th Amendment remains the foundational, still-unfinished precondition for any lasting solution to India's urban management crisis.

(b) Lack of political will to support several administrative reforms has led to their inadequate implementation. Critically validate. [20]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the recurring pattern of well-designed but poorly-implemented reforms
2. BODY: Validate the claim with specific reform examples across sectors, then examine counter-considerations
3. CONCLUSION: End with a critically balanced verdict

INTRODUCTION

Across multiple domains examined in this paper — police reform, civil-service capacity, local-body devolution, and disinvestment — a recurring pattern emerges: administrative reform recommendations are often technically sound and well-researched, yet their implementation falls significantly short, a gap substantially, though not exclusively, attributable to **lack of sustained political will**.

BODY

Validating evidence — reforms undermined by weak political will

- **Police reforms (Prakash Singh case)**: as discussed in Q7(a), nearly two decades of state non-compliance with clear Supreme Court directives demonstrates how political executives across party lines resist ceding control over a politically useful instrument, regardless of judicial mandate.
- **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (2005-09)**: submitted 15 comprehensive reports covering civil-service reform, ethics in governance, local governance, and crisis management — the overwhelming majority of specific recommendations remain unimplemented or only partially adopted, with successive governments citing the reports selectively rather than pursuing systematic implementation.
- **73rd/74th Amendment devolution**: as discussed throughout this paper (Q1d, Q7b, Q8a), the constitutional mandate for genuine local self-government devolution (3Fs) remains incomplete nearly 30 years after enactment — state governments, across the political spectrum, have shown persistent reluctance to devolve real fiscal and functional authority to elected local bodies, preferring to retain control through bureaucratic and parastatal channels.
- **Lateral entry**: political and social resistance (Q5a) has kept a technically sound capacity-building reform limited to token scale.

- **Fiscal transparency reforms**: reluctance to fully disclose off-budget borrowing (Q6b) reflects short-term political incentive to obscure the true fiscal position rather than a lack of technical capacity to do so.

Underlying reasons political will is often absent

- **Loss-aversion among political and bureaucratic incumbents**: reforms that redistribute power (to local bodies, to specialist lateral entrants, to independent oversight bodies) directly threaten existing patronage networks and discretionary control that political and administrative elites have strong incentive to protect.
- **Short electoral time horizons**: administrative reforms often yield benefits only over the medium-to-long term, while carrying short-term political/administrative transition costs and resistance — a mismatch with electoral-cycle incentives (echoing the "double-edged sword" and competitive-federalism populism themes discussed elsewhere).
- **Coalition and federal political complexity**: reforms requiring both Union and State cooperation (e.g., local-body devolution, police reform) face a **collective-action problem** — no single government wants to unilaterally cede power without assurance others will reciprocate.

Counter-considerations — reform failure is not solely about political will

- Some implementation gaps reflect genuine **capacity constraints** (Q6a) — even where political will exists, state-level administrative and financial capacity to execute complex reforms may be lacking.
- **Design flaws** independent of political will also contribute — reforms transplanted without adequate contextual adaptation (echoing the Riggsian ecological critique from Paper I) can fail even with full political backing.
- Some reforms have, in fact, been successfully implemented with sustained political commitment — the **2017 GST rollout**, its **September 2025 "GST 2.0" rate-rationalisation** (collapsing multiple slabs into a simplified 5%/18% structure, with a special 40% rate confined to luxury/sin goods, implemented nationwide within weeks of Council approval), Aadhaar/DBT expansion, and corporatisation of OFB — demonstrating that political will, when genuinely mobilised, *can* overcome implementation resistance at real speed. Conversely, the **IDBI Bank stake-sale being effectively shelved in March 2026** after years in the pipeline — even with formal government commitment on paper — shows how quickly reform stalls the moment sustained political priority is withdrawn, reinforcing rather than undermining the claim.

CONCLUSION

The claim is substantially **validated**: across police reform, local governance devolution, civil-service capacity and fiscal transparency, the recurring gap between sound reform design and weak implementation correlates strongly with the absence of sustained political commitment to cede entrenched control — though genuine, lasting reform ultimately requires political will to be paired with adequate administrative capacity and contextually-adapted design, not political will alone.

(c) Women in panchayats challenge the established patriarchal norms and contest structural inequalities in society. Explain. [10]

ANS.

STRUCTURE
1. INTRODUCTION: Start with the 73rd Amendment's reservation for women
2. BODY: Explain how women's participation challenges patriarchal norms, then note persisting constraints
3. CONCLUSION: End with a balanced but hopeful assessment

INTRODUCTION

The **73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992)** mandated **not less than one-third reservation** for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (subsequently raised to **50% in many states**), creating, at over 1.3 million elected women representatives, the world's largest cohort of women in local government — a structural intervention that has demonstrably begun to challenge entrenched patriarchal governance norms.

BODY

How women in panchayats challenge patriarchal norms

- **Policy-priority shift**: empirical research (notably **Chattopadhyay and Duflo's** widely-cited study of West Bengal and Rajasthan panchayats) demonstrated that women-headed panchayats invest significantly more in infrastructure directly relevant to women's practical needs — drinking water, sanitation — validating the theory that descriptive representation shapes substantive policy outcomes.

- **Visible presence in traditionally male public space**: women's routine participation in Gram Sabha meetings and panchayat decision-making directly contests the traditional exclusion of women from public/political spaces in much of rural India.
- **Role-modelling effect**: sustained exposure to women leaders has been shown in longitudinal studies to reduce gender-bias in aspirations among young women and adolescent girls in the same villages, indicating an inter-generational norm-shifting effect beyond immediate policy outcomes.
- **Grassroots collective mobilisation**: women panchayat leaders have, in several documented instances, used their position to address issues like domestic violence, alcohol-related social problems, and access to health/nutrition services — areas often neglected under male-dominated local governance, directly contesting patriarchal silence on such issues.
- **Kerala's Kudumbashree model**: while not a panchayat body per se, its close integration with local self-government demonstrates how women's collective economic and social organisation at the grassroots reinforces political participation and structural bargaining power.

Persisting constraints — the "structural" resistance

- **"Sarpanch-Pati" phenomenon**: a well-documented pattern where elected women sarpanches' authority is informally exercised by their husbands or male relatives, reflecting how patriarchal control adapts to formal reservation requirements rather than disappearing outright.
- **Limited administrative and financial literacy support**: newly-elected women representatives often face inadequate capacity-building support to exercise their formal authority effectively and independently.
- **Social and familial resistance**: women panchayat leaders frequently face social backlash, harassment or non-cooperation from entrenched local power structures (caste and patriarchal elites) resistant to genuine authority-sharing.
- **Rotation of reserved seats**: mandatory rotation of women's reservation across constituencies each electoral cycle, while ensuring wider representation, limits continuity and the ability of individual women leaders to build sustained political capital and experience.

CONCLUSION

Women in panchayats have made a genuine, empirically-documented dent in patriarchal local-governance norms — shifting policy priorities, expanding public-space participation, and role-modelling for the next generation — but the persistence of adaptive resistance (the Sarpanch-Pati phenomenon foremost among them) shows that formal political reservation, while necessary, is not by itself sufficient to fully dismantle the deeper structural inequalities it was designed to contest.